

Tempe Fire Department Policies and Procedures
Civil Disturbance Plan
209.05
Rev 07/01/03

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the Fire Department's approach to dealing with incidents involving civil disturbances. The procedure describes modes, security, command structures, and cooperative approaches with the Tempe Police Department and other agencies. Within this procedure, a civil disturbance is defined as a situation involving several random or specific acts of violence or mayhem occurring roughly at the same time and related to the same cause.

POLICY

The Tempe Fire Department will use a three-tiered approach to respond to incidents involving civil disturbances. It is the responsibility of the Alarm Room supervisor, company officers, and battalion chiefs to be alert to potential or actual hazards due to a civil disturbance. There are times when such potential is high and well-known throughout the system; however, at other times, a single act or incident can spontaneously escalate into a significant disturbance.

PROCEDURE

TIER-ONE RESPONSE

When responding to an incident involving potential violence, the Alarm Room and all responding units will follow the procedure outlined in the Response to Incidents Involving Violence policy.

TIER-TWO RESPONSE

When an actual act of violence towards firefighters has occurred at a specific location of the city (i.e., a random bullet fired at a fire apparatus, but resulting in no injuries), and there are no indications that the situation involves any other related acts, a perimeter shall be identified.

For at least the remainder of that work shift, fire department companies shall not respond into that area without a police escort, and shall stage within the requirements of the Response to Incidents Involving Violence policy when they do enter the area. Future Code 3 response shall not occur into or through the area until conditions have returned to normal and the perimeter eliminated. Companies shall stay clear of the area when returning from calls or activities. All surrounding fire department companies shall return to and remain in their stations except to respond to and return directly from calls.

Any fire stations located inside the established perimeter may have all their resources (including reserve and support apparatus) reassigned to a station outside the perimeter or to a Level II staging area.

Fire stations located adjacent to the perimeter area will have companies remain in their stations but shall go into a "lockdown" mode for security reasons. All doors will be closed and locked. Members will remain indoors at all times.

TIER-THREE RESPONSE

When a series of actual acts of violence have occurred in a specific area of the city (i.e., unrelated set fires, a series of assaults, or looting), a perimeter will be established around the area. A command post is to be established well outside that perimeter utilizing the Mobile Command Center, or if appropriate, a fire station. When possible, a joint command post should be established with the police department. If this is not possible, a ranking police officer should be requested to report to the fire department command post.

Command will establish Level II Staging near the command post and request appropriate resources from Alarm.

Close communications shall be maintained between the Alarm Room (via an Alarm Room Liaison Sector located at the command post), and the police liaison. The command post will direct all response into the Hazards Zone. Alarm will provide Command all requests for emergency service in the identified area.

Alarm will also advise Command of all emergency requests to perimeter areas. Command shall determine the appropriate response to the incidents (if any), obtain a police escort, and actually direct the companies to respond.

All resources responding into the perimeter will be grouped (no single company responses) and with police escorts. Responding units will communicate only with Command. Request for additional assistance by a company/unit shall be directed to Command, utilizing the emergency traffic procedure if necessary. Upon completion of the call, the companies shall return to the command post, be accounted for, and return to Level II Staging. Command shall consider rotating units from throughout the city into the Level II Staging area to respond. This can help reduce tension and maintain alertness among crews. If disturbances are occurring in more than one area of the city, this system may be duplicated in other locations. When operating in a Tier-Three situation, emphasis must be placed on stabilizing the incident as rapidly as possible, if safe to do so, and then pulling out.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- No single company responses will be permitted in Tier-Three situations.
- Police escorts will be required in Tier-Three situations.
- All fire department personnel will respond to and from all emergencies in full protective clothing (helmet, bunkers, etc.) in Tier-Two and Three modes, and will remain in full gear until returned to staging or their assigned fire station.
- Use of sirens and air horns within the perimeter should be avoided. Emergency lights may be necessary but should be used as little as possible.
- When responding to Tier-Two and Three situations, apparatus must be placed in a manner that will allow for rapid, unobstructed, retreat from the area. Apparatus must also be parked in a manner that best protects the crew.
- When operating in Tier-Two and Three modes, all tools and equipment located on the exterior of apparatus must be removed and placed in interior compartments.
- Crews should be careful about what is said over the radio. Outside speakers on apparatus broadcast all messages (to the public). MDTs, MCTs, or cellular phones should be used as much as possible for sensitive communications.
- Our actions and behavior are critical. We should back-off in most potentially violent situations so that we don't fuel a major disturbance when it could have been avoided with the use of discretion.
- Body armor may be necessary in a Tier-Three situation and should be addressed by Command.
- There shall be no ride alongs during Tier-Two and Tier-Three response.

TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Patients may be more effectively treated in a potentially violent situation if the patient is rapidly removed from the scene to an exterior treatment area (scoop and run).
- When no lives are at stake, emphasis will be on protecting savable property. Buildings, vehicles, etc., that are fully involved with no or little exposure problem, may be left to burn.
- Emphasis will be fast attack, heavy streams to rapidly control and extinguish the fire and then to get out of the area. Routine salvage, ventilation, and overhaul practices may be discontinued. Use of hand lines should be limited.
- All fire units will enter the perimeter as intact groups, travel in groups, operate in groups, and return in groups.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- We should escalate the response to a civil disturbance to include additional chief officers quickly to provide Command support and other agency liaison responsibilities.
- A fire station, other City facility, or school, if appropriately located, may make an excellent command post and staging area and can be easily secured. Schools may provide more effective space.
- The Emergency Operations Center may be activated.
- Consider an all call for Chief Officers for informational purposes or resources.